CONSIDERATIONS

ON THE

CORN LAWS,

WITH

REMARKS

ON THE

OBSERVATIONS OF LORD SHEFFIELD

ON THE

CORN BILL,

Which was printed by Order of the HOUSE of COMMONS in December, 1790.

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THE encouragement of agriculture, and the ſafe proviſion of Bread Corn for the ſubſiſtence of the people, being cloſely connected with the general proſperity of the kingdom; the laws for the protection of tillage and for relief againſt ſcarcity, have always engaged the attention and have frequently intereſted the prejudices of the public. On a ſubject which involves the various intereſts of the growers and conſumers of Corn,

Corn, it will not be a matter of ſurpriſe that very contradictory opinions are advanced; and as all claſſes of the people are much concerned in what relates to their ſubſiſtence, it may be allowed to examine the different ſyſtems which have been propoſed by the evidence of experience and facts; in order to reconcile, if poſſible, the oppoſition of ſentiments, on queſtions in which the community at large have a common intereſt.

The Act 29th Geo. III. cap. 58. intituled "*An Act for better regulating and aſcertaining* "*the Importation and Exportation of Grain,*" being found ineffectual for the purpoſes of *regulating* the importation and exportation or of *aſcertaining* the prices of Corn, it became neceſſary to ſuſpend the operation of that law in December 1789, before it had been three months in force; and three temporary Acts have ſince that time been paſſed, by the firſt of which, 30 Geo. III. cap. 1. importation was allowed and exportation was prohibited

for a limited time; by the ſecond, 30 Geo. III. cap. 42. His Majeſty was empowered, with the advice of His Privy Council, to permit and to prohibit the exportation and importation of Corn until the 28th of February, 1791, which powers were continued by the 31ſt Geo. III. cap. 4. until the 10th of June following.

In March 1790, a Repreſentation was made by the Lords of the Committee of Council, appointed for the conſideration of all matters relating to trade and foreign plantations, upon the preſent ſtate of the laws for regulating the exportation and importation of Corn; and ſubmitting to His Majeſty's conſideration ſome further proviſions, which were wanting to amend and improve the ſaid laws. In the laſt Seſſion of Parliament, a Bill for giving effect to the principles recommended in the Repreſentation of Council, was read twice, committed, reported in the Houſe of Commons, and ordered to be printed on the 20th

of

of December, 1790, prior to the adjournment at Chriſtmas.

About the time that this Bill was ordered to be recommitted for further amendment, Obſervations on the Bill were publiſhed by Lord Sheffield, dated the 17th of February, 1791, in which it is urged, that the Corn Bill is highly unfavourable to agriculture *, that its object is evidently to keep down the price of Corn *at all events* †, and that all the alterations of the old laws made by the Act of 1773 appear to have been much for the worſe ‡,

His Lordſhip obſerves, that on a ſubject of ſuch deep concern, he ſhould think it blameable to obtrude merely ſpeculative opinions §; that little more is required than raiſing the duties and prices to what they were: that in this there would be no change

* P. 3. † P. 4. ‡ P. 16. § P. 69.

that

that could excite a juſt apprehenſion to the leaſt enterpriſing or moſt timid Miniſter; that there would be no reliance on doubtful ſpeculation *. A panic is expreſſed † at a paſſage in the Repreſentation of the Lords of Council, which ſtates that " from accounts " they have received of the produce and con- " ſumption of Corn in moſt European " countries, they are inclined to believe, that " in ordinary years the produce of Corn in " Europe is not more than equal to the " conſumption of its inhabitants; and that " whenever the crops fail in any degree, " the deficiency can only be ſupplied from " the harveſt of America." His Lordſhip obſerves on this paſſage in the Repreſentation of the Privy Council, that America never in one year ſent to Europe ſufficient for one day's ſupply—not even one meal for its inhabitants; and he ſtates, that the average export of wheat and flour from all North America, including the remaining

* Page 26. † Page 6.

colonies, for three years ending in 1771, chuſing a medium time between the two wars, was 175,502 quarters to Europe, including the Mediterranean, ſcarce one week's ſupply even for Great Britain *. His Lordſhip argues againſt a ſuſpending power being given to the Privy Council, and againſt the method of aſcertaining the prices under the penalties and authority of inſpectors preſcribed by the ineffectual Act 29 Geo. III. cap. 58†.

But his Lordſhip ſupports with arguments, that propoſition in the repreſentation of the Committee of Council, which their Lordſhips ſubmitted with greater diffidence, as containing two regulations of more importance; and which they only ventured to ſuggeſt, that it might be taken into conſideration; viz. the continuing the export of Corn to limited prices when bounty ceaſes, and the allowing the importation of Corn

* P. 79, 80. † P. 64—67.

from

from Ireland at lower prices than from foreign parts*.

His Lordſhip propoſed, to maintain prohibitory duties on the import of Corn until there is a real ſcarcity, and an equalizing duty at all times†: to continue the bounty on wheat to 48s. per quarter ‡: to continue the export of wheat without bounty to 53-4s. ‖: that the high or prohibitory duty ſhould not ceaſe till wheat was at 53-4 §; but with the exception that when the ports are open for wheat from foreign countries at 53-4 s. it might be admitted from Ireland on the ſame duties at 48s*. On the rate of the low duties his Lordſhip ſays, "But above all, I am anxious to maintain "the low duties of our old law, namely, "8s. per quarter on wheat, till the price is

* Obſervations of Lord Sheffield, p. 34, 47, 48; and Repreſentation of Lords of Council, p. 18.

† P. 70. ‡ P. 31. ‖ P. 34.
§ P. 36. * P. 48.

"41*." In oppoſition to the privilege of warehouſing foreign Corn, and to the principle of ſtoring it at the public expence, it is ſaid, "In ſo ſtrong a light do I ſee the "ill conſequence of warehouſing, that, "notwithſtanding the bounties on export "ſeem neceſſary to encourage tillage, and "give us any chance of a market for our "Corn in foreign countries, yet I ſhould "much rather give up thoſe bounties en-"tirely than admit the clauſe in queſtion†."

In ſupport of thoſe propoſitions, the export of Corn for nineteen years ending in 1765, is contraſted with the ſums paid to foreigners for the ſupply of Corn, and for bounties on Corn exported in eighteen years, ending in 1788‡: it is further urged, that manufactures are aſſiſted by ſomewhat of a high price for Corn, for that if the manufacturer can gain as much in three or four days as will maintain him for a week, he will be

* P. 38, 39. † P. 61. ‡ P. 5.

idle

idle the two or three firſt days of the week*; that the poor receive relief whenever the price of Bread Corn exceeds what is moderate, and that almoſt the whole of that heavy tax levied for the poor, amounting to more than two millions yearly, is paid by the land†; that the landed intereſt being pledged by the Poor Laws to ſupply all deficiencies, have thence the beſt claim to fix the prices at which the ports ſhould be open or ſhut in reſpect to Corn‡; and that in return for the great revenue paid by land, in return for the enormous taxes paid for the poor of all trades, the landed intereſt is entitled to the ſupply of the home market§.

The arguments contained in this publication, anſwered the purpoſe of a day: in the Bill which had been reported in the Houſe of Commons in December, 1790, alterations were made on the 17th of May, 1791, by

* P. 23. † P. 22. ‡ P. 24, 25.
§ P. 60.

which

which the import rates of foreign Corn were raiſed, the duties were increaſed, and a diſtinction was made by which Corn is allowed to be imported from Ireland and His Majeſty's Colonies, at lower prices than from foreign parts; and by a clauſe introduced ſo late as the 25th of May, Corn which has been warehouſed under the joint locks of the King and the importer, and is delivered out for home conſumption, in addition to the duties which ſhall at the time be due, and payable for the like ſort of corn imported into the ſame port from any foreign country, is made ſubject to the further duties ſpecified under the name of the firſt low duties;—viz. 2s. 6d. per quarter on wheat, 1s. 6d. per cwt. on wheat flour, 1s. 6d. per quarter on rye, peaſe, and beans, 1s. per quarter on oats imported into Great Britain, and 1s. per boll on oatmeal imported into Scotland.

As thoſe alterations, (which were introduced in ſo late a ſtage of the Bill as to preclude

preclude the oppoſition of the people by petition with effect, the Bill having paſſed the Commons in May, and received the Royal Aſſent on the 10th of June,) are in direct oppoſition to the leading principles of the Bill printed in December 1790, and to the ſyſtem of 1773; it will be proper to inveſtigate the arguments and facts, which have been advanced in ſupport of the alterations which were made in the lateſt ſtages of this Bill; and to enquire what amendments of this law may be neceſſary, for the encouragement of tillage, and for the relief of the people againſt ſcarcity and diſtreſs.

The opinions which are urged by Lord Sheffield, appear to owe their origin, to the comparative ſtatement of the export of Corn from 1746 to 1765, and of the import and export of Corn from 1770 to 1789; and to the panic which is expreſſed at the information that whe[illegible]er the crops of Europe fail

in any degree, the deficiency can only be ſupplied from the harveſt of AMERICA.

The information which has given ſo much alarm, that when the crops of Europe fail in any degree, the deficiency can only be ſupplied from the harveſt of America, is certainly well founded; for it is ſupported by uniform experience and reaſon, conſidering Corn with Lord Sheffield as a manufacture*, that the growers will not raiſe more than the ordinary conſumption and the demand require; and when the crops of Europe fail, it is from the harveſt of America, rather than from the produce of Africa or of Aſia, that the deficiency can be ſupplied. If the fact was otherwiſe than is ſtated in the Repreſentation of the Lords of the Committee of Privy Council, that in ordinary years the produce of Corn in Europe is not more than equal to the conſumption of its inhabitants, very ſerious apprehenſions might

* Page 25.

be

be entertained by thoſe who think of danger as men ought to do in order to avert it, without being loud in trumpeting their fears to diſturb others, or ſuffering their alarm to interrupt their own philoſophy; for a regular although very moderate exceſs of the produce above the conſumption and demand for Corn in Europe, *would tend in a certain degree to ſtop the plough.* So importantly is the general tillage governed by the regular demand, that at a period when the tillage in Turkey was moſt flouriſhing, the prohibition of export produced a dearth in leſs than three years.—It is ſtated in a note to the edition printed in 1766 of Smith's Corn Tracts, firſt publiſhed in 1758, that in Turkey, between twenty and thirty years preceding that time, the Grand Vizir ſuffered a more general and more open exportation of Corn to be carried on than any of his predeceſſors had done, inſomuch that three hundred French veſſels were in one day ſeen to enter Smyrna Bay to load Corn, at which time wheat was ſold for

leſs than ſeventeen pence Engliſh the buſhel, including the expences of putting the ſame on board. The Janizaries and people took the alarm, that all the Corn was going to be exported, and that they muſt be ſtarved; and they became ſo mutinous in Conſtantinople, that they could not be appeaſed till the vizir was ſtrangled, and his body thrown out to them. His ſucceſſor taking particular care not to ſplit on the ſame rock, would not ſuffer any exportation; and many of the farmers, who looked on the exportation as their greateſt demand, neglected tillage to ſuch a degree to ſave their rents, which in that country are paid either in kind or in proportion to their crops, that the ſame quantity of Corn which in time of export ſold for not quite ſeventeen pence, was in leſs than three years worth more than ſix ſhillings. The diſtreſſes of the people of Smyrna were in conſequence ſuch, that every bakehouſe and magazine of Corn was obliged to have a military guard, which took care

that no one perſon ſhould have more than a fixed quantity; and ſo ſtrictly was this order obſerved, that an Engliſh ſhip in the Turkey trade was detained from ſailing ſome time for want of bread; and the ill conſequences of thoſe proceedings were not removed in many years *.

If this information, that in ordinary years the produce of Corn in Europe is not more than equal to the conſumption of its inhabitants, appears more alarming, becauſe America is the ſource from whence the deficiency can only be ſupplied, when the crops fail in any degree; if the danger or the jealouſy of a dependence on America for Corn, when the crops of Europe are deficient, as connected with the political and commercial relations of Great Britain and the United States of America, is the cauſe of alarm; it is proper calmly to examine in what degree this dependence actually exiſts, and ſeriouſly to

* Smith's Corn Tracts, page 33, 34.

conſider the conſequences to Great Britain of that dependence of Europe, when her crops are in any degree deficient, upon America for ſupplies. In this examination it will perhaps be found, that in ordinary years, inſtead of the produce of Corn in Europe being either more than equal to the conſumption of its inhabitants, or being even barely equal to that conſumption, this produce is actually inſufficient, and ſhort of anſwering the European demands. The kingdoms of Spain and Portugal do not raiſe Bread Corn nearly ſufficient for their conſumption; and it is well known, that the American harveſts furniſh regular ſupplies to thoſe ſouthern markets of Europe.

On this ſubject it has however been advanced by Lord Sheffield, that "AMERICA, "that country on which, according to the "opinion of the Committee of Council, all "this quarter of the world is to depend for "ſubſiſtence, never in one year ſent to Eu-

"rope

" rope ſufficient for one day's ſupply—not " even one meal, for its inhabitants;" and that the average export of wheat and flour from all North America to Europe, including the Mediterranean, was only 175,502 quarters annually, for three years, ending in 1771, taken as a medium time between the two wars *. His Lordſhip ſays likewiſe, on the ſubject of the paſſage in the repreſentation of the Lords of Council, reſpecting the ſupplies of American Corn when the crops are deficient in Europe; " if this be true, it is the " moſt alarming information that we of this " country have ever heard; ſo alarming, that " I cannot conceive the loſs of all we have " in Aſia and America would be half ſo fatal, " or ſo much to be apprehended †."

In anſwer to this, the Committee of Council have not conveyed the wild opinion, that all this quarter of the world is to depend on America for ſubſiſtence, but that

* P. 79, 80. † P. 6.

when

when the crops of Europe fail in any degree, the deficiency can only be ſupplied from America; and it appears by an account (No. 9,) publiſhed in the Proceedings of His Majeſty's Moſt Honourable Privy Council, reſpecting an inſect ſuppoſed to infeſt the wheat of the territories of the United States of America, preſented to Parliament and ordered to be printed April 21, 1789, that the quantity of wheat imported in 1775 from America into England only, in one year, was 246,902 quarters.

The conſequences to Great Britain, of America being the ſource from whence the ſupplies are to be drawn when the crops of Europe are deficient, may be traced by ſtating the tonnage of Britiſh and of other European ſhipping employed in the commerce to the United States of America. It appears by an abſtract of the tonnage of foreign veſſels entered into the ports of the United States, from Oct. 1, 1789, to Sept.

Sept. 30, 1790, annexed to a Report of the Secretary of State of the United States, and publiſhed by order of the Senate at Philadelphia, 1791, that the tonnage of the veſſels belonging to the different European powers entered in the laſt year, was 262,912 tons, of which there were belonging to the

Britiſh dominions - -	225,495 Tons
France - - -	13,435
Holland - -	8,815
Spain - - -	8,551
Portugal - - -	2,924
Denmark - -	1,619
Germany - -	1,368
Pruſſia - - -	394
Sweden - - -	311
Total	262,912 Tons.

In this view of the American commerce, it ought not to be a matter of alarm, and ſtill leſs a matter of jealouſy to the people of Great Britain, that the ſupplies of Bread Corn which the kingdoms of Spain and Portugal regularly

regularly require to ſupply the deficiencies of their own crops, ſhould be drawn from the harveſts of America rather than from thoſe of France.

The exportation of Corn from Great Britain between 1746 and 1765, has been contraſted with the import and export of Corn between 1770 and 1789; and the balance paid for Corn imported in the laſt eighteen years, and for bounties on Corn exported during the ſame period, is ſtated at 291,000l. per annum.—In this ſtatement, the proſperity of tillage in the nineteen years from 1746 to 1765 is aſſumed; and the unprofitableneſs of tillage in the eighteen years from 1770 to 1789 is inferred; on the compariſon of the quantities exported and imported, without any reference to the prices paid to the growers of Corn in the firſt period of nineteen years.—In order therefore to aſcertain the true ſtate of the encouragement given to the growers of Corn during both periods of years, it may be proper

to

to ſtate the average prices of each period from the beſt authorities which can be reſorted to, and to enquire into the commerce, manufactures, and population of the times.

In the appendix to the Repreſentation of the Lords of Council, an account is given of the average prices of Corn from 1771 to 1789, extracted from the Corn Regiſter eſtabliſhed by the Act 10 Geo. III.; but no account is given of the prices of Corn from 1746 to 1765, becauſe there was no law for regiſtering the prices of Corn until the Act 10 Geo. III. was paſſed, for which the kingdom is indebted to Mr. Whitbread. But to ſupply that defect, an account of the prices of wheat at Windſor market taken from the audit books of Eton College, and of the prices of wheat in England taken from An Enquiry into the prices of Wheat, &c. publiſhed in London in 1768, for 7 years from 1746 to 1752, and for 12 years from 1753 to 1765, may be deemed ſuf-

 ficiently

ficiently authentic, being taken from the beſt authorities to which reference can now be had*. It appears by this account, that the average prices of wheat from 1746 to 1752 were 33s. 1¼d. per quarter at Windſor, 29s. per quarter in England; and that from 1753 to 1765, wheat was 37s. 2d. at Windſor, 32s. 6d. per quarter on the average of the prices in England for thoſe years. Theſe prices do not bear any proportion to the value of wheat from 1771 to 1789, which was 44s. 9d. per quarter on the average of thoſe eighteen years, by the account in the appendix to the Repreſentation of the Lords of the Council.

The cauſes of thoſe low prices for Corn from 1746 to 1765, will be found by enquiring into the ſtate of commerce, manufactures, and population. Mr. Poſtlethwaite ſtates, that in the year 1748 France underſold England in the woollen trade in foreign

* Appendix, No. I.

markets,

markets, from 12 to 16 per cent. The manufacture of Mancheſter goods was eſtabliſhed at Rouen in 1751, and was ſaid to underſell the Engliſh 14 per cent. It was ſtated by Mr. Hanway, that France in 1752 had ten ſhips in the Turkey trade for one belonging to England. The exportation of wheat from 1746 to 1752 was 3,608,287 quarters, the exportation of other grain was very large, and the bounties paid on Corn exported in the 7 years from 1746 to 1752 amounted to 1,274,325l. 6s. 10d †. In 1749 Mr. Pelham informed the Houſe of Commons, that a very extraordinary ſum had been paid as bounty for the exportation of Corn in the three preceding years; and in 1753 the treaſury appears to have been very low, for an Act was paſſed to pay the Corn bounties by debentures bearing intereſt at 3 per cent per annum till diſcharged. Some manufacturers were ſtopped on board a veſſel at Spithead bound to Spain, by an order from

† Appendix, No. 2.

the Secretary of State in 1749. His late Majeſty in his Speech to Parliament on the 2d of December 1756, took notice of the diſtreſs of the poor; ſaying, "I cannot here "be unmindful of the poorer ſort, from "the preſent high price of Corn; and the "diſturbances which have ariſen therefrom; "and I recommend to you to conſider of "proper proviſions, for preventing the like "miſchiefs hereafter." The prices of wheat in London were 37 s. to 43 s. per quarter in November, and 40 s. to 47 s. per quarter in December, 1756, when His Majeſty recommended the diſtreſſed ſtate of the poor to the conſideration of parliament; and it is ſtated in the publications of the time, that trade was bad and the people ſtarving at Sheffield and in other parts of England, emigration could not be prevented, trade and manufactures decayed. The number of taxable houſes which in 1688 had been 838,694, was reduced in 1758 to 690,000.

Tillage

Tillage ſuffered in the general diſtreſs, and that diſtreſs was imputed then, as the decreaſed export of Corn is imputed now, to various cauſes inſtead of the true one. The ex-chancellors of the Exchequer of that day, exclaimed againſt the high price of proviſions. In 1757, 1758, 1759, exportation of Corn was prohibited by various Acts, the diſtillery was ſtopped, free importation without any duty was allowed; and a Bill which was brought in to reduce the bounty, was read twice in the Houſe of Commons in 1758, but wiſely dropped. From the decay of trade and the diſtreſs of the manufacturers, the conſumption and demand for Corn in the home markets were naturally reduced; and in the twelve years from 1753 to 1765 the exportation of wheat was 3,191,729 quarters, the quantity of other grain exported was likewiſe conſiderable, and the bounties paid on Corn exported in that period amounted to 1,424,899l. 4s. 6d *.

* Appendix, No. 2.

The

The great exportation of Corn from 1746 to 1765, although it is a proof of bountiful ſeaſons during the period from 1746 to 1752 and in many of the ſubſequent years, is no proof of beneficial tillage, or of a good ſyſtem of Corn laws; for it appears, by the prices during the entire period from 1746 to 1765, that tillage ſuffered from the emigration of the people and the decay of trade; that the ſyſtem of Corn laws, if ſuch it can be termed, was a continued ſeries of fluctuating diſgraceful policy from 1756 to 1765, which was continued till the Act 13 Geo. III. was paſſed; and it is ſtated by Mr. Arthur Young, that in the ſixteen years from 1756 to 1773 ending with 1772, the bounty was ſuſpended during ten of the ſixteen years, and export was entirely prohibited during more than half the period †.

The balance of ſums paid for Corn imported and for the bounty on Corn exported

† Young's Political Arithmetic, p. 36.

for

for the eighteen years from 1771 to 1789, is ſtated in the Repreſentation of the Lords of Council to have been 5,236,415l. 17s. 10d. or 291,000l. per annum. This ſum ariſes,

	£.	s.	d.
From the bounties on Corn exported in the 18 years - -	460,415	17	10
From a balance of the coſt of 4,780,867 quarters of oats imported in the 18 years, after deducting the quantity of oats exported in the ſame period, which are valued at 16s. 2d. per quarter, amounting to - -	3,904,374	13	2
And from the balance of the coſt of all other grain, excepting oats, imported in the 18 years, after deducting the quantities of corn exported in the ſame time, amounting to - - - -	871,625	6	10
Making in the whole the ſum ſtated of £.	5,236,415	17	10

In judging of the cauſe and extent of this balance of importation, it muſt be obſerved, that

that the balance of the importation of all grain, excepting oats, was produced by the uncommon deficiency in the crop of 1782, which fell very ſhort of the uſual growth. In that year, neither corn nor fruit came to maturity; there was cold weather all the year; an early and intenſely cold winter; ſnow, hard froſts and ice in autumn, whilſt the growing crop in unfavourable ſoils was green; and an epidemical diſtemper both ſummer and winter, the influenza affecting all ranks from Moſcow to Madrid. The balance of wheat imported in the eighteen years from 1771 to 1789 was 767,841 quarters, but the growth of wheat in 1782 was conſidered to fall ſhort more than one million of quarters, which was made up by a ſurplus of former harveſts remaining in the kingdom, by an importation of 584,183 quarters of wheat and flour in 1783, and by the next crop being reaped very early. If the deficiency produced by the failure in the crop of 1782 is ſet off, the growth of Corn in the

other

other ſeventeen years was *fully* equal to the conſumption of the kingdom, oats only excepted, of which the conſumption by horſes has increaſed more rapidly than the tillage to raiſe this grain has done.

During a part of the period from 1771 to 1789, trade, manufactures and population have increaſed very rapidly; and it appears evidently by the prices which have been paid for Corn, that tillage has been benefited by the general proſperity of the kingdom. It may therefore be concluded, that the balance of the importation of all Corn, excepting oats, from 1771 to 1789, was produced by the uncommon deficiency of one very ſhort crop, 1782, by ſome increaſe of luxury, by population increaſing more rapidly than tillage has done; but chiefly from the increaſed conſumption produced by the improved condition of the labouring and induſtrious poor, ariſing from the proſperity of trade and manufactures.

In anſwer to all the arguments for reſtoring the old ſyſtem of Corn laws, the fact is that thoſe laws were not carried into effect, and that the proviſions which were repealed in 1773 do not appear to have been adapted to the circumſtances of the kingdom. The remarks made by Lord Sheffield on the ſubject of popular commotion ‖, would admit of very full reply in this place; but it may be more prudent to appeal to the occurrences from the year 1756 to the year 1773, and to the experience of later times more favourable for active induſtry. Thoſe occurrences and that experience tend equally to prove, that the general intereſts of our agriculture, manufactures, and commerce, are very cloſely interwoven in one wiſe beneficial ſyſtem; that the rents and value of land in a trading kingdom, will always be in proportion to the number and riches of the people; and that any diſtreſs to the labouring poor, muſt become injurious to the whole community.

‖ Page 65.

The

The argument, that if the manufacturer can gain as much in three or four days as will maintain him ſeven days, he will be idle the remainder of the week, applies rather to the rate of wages than to the prices of proviſions. Where very high wages are paid for ſuperior ſkill in mechanical labour which few can perform equally well, ſome diſſipation may enſue; and in the manufactures of fancy goods where the employment and demand are leſs regular, the ſame effect may be obſerved; but in the great and important branches of manufacture, which furniſh the moſt regular and conſtant employment of induſtry, the wages will be proportioned to the uſual prices of proviſions, and it is of conſequence that proviſions be not raiſed above the prices which the labourer and the manufacturer are enabled to pay.

The arguments drawn from the ſyſtem of the poor laws, claim attentive conſideration. Is it intended to be urged, that the import

rates and duties of Corn ſhould be raiſed ſo high; as to make it neceſſary for the manufacturer and labourer when Corn is ſcarce and dear to depend upon the pariſh for relief, before their wants ſhall be ſupplied by importation? The experiment would be injurious to tillage, becauſe hoſtile to population, the fruit of productive when encouraged induſtry, the beſt ſupport of the plough. It is remarked in a late publication *, that "a "prudent adminiſtration ſhould beware of a "writer, who deceives himſelf by too ar- "dently maintaining a favourite hypotheſis." In another paſſage of the ſame publication, on the ſubject of certain manufactures which had been exported and chiefly ſupplied from Great Britain; the writer ſagaciouſly expreſſes himſelf thus---"Lord Sheffield ſeems to "have expected a conſiderable importation "of theſe articles: *but he did not advert to*

* A brief examination of Lord Sheffield's obſervations on the commerce of the United States of America, printed at Philadelphia, 1791, p. 23.

"*the*

" *the poſſibility, that the manufacturers them-*
" *ſelves would emigrate to us; which is every*
" *day taking place* †." If induſtry is allowed to become a burthen on the pariſh, and is ſent to the workhouſe; there is more than a *poſſibility* of the danger, that fertile induſtry may remove the burthen elſewhere. To remove that induſtry to any other pariſh in England, where hands are preſſingly wanted, and where wages would be paid proportioned to a very full price for proviſions, is a freedom not yet allowed even in this enlightened day: the laws of ſettlement deny this bleſſing to the people, and forbid this path to the quicker progreſs of national proſperity. If the period is arrived, when population is increaſing vigouroufly, when manufactures are increaſing more rapidly than the progreſs of population, aided by labour ſaving machines, can ſufficiently furniſh hands to carry on; it may be the fitteſt ſeaſon to remedy the impolicy of the laws of ſettlement, and

† Ibid. p. 13.

to

to cheriſh population by allowing the free circulation of active productive induſtry.

Where a great object is in view, ſomething may be ſacrificed to prejudices, the better to enſure ſucceſs; and to prevent the objections to what might be oppoſed as too violent an alteration of eſtabliſhed laws, it might be expedient to have recourſe to the experience of a temporary law, and *to ſuſpend* or to amend without proceeding to repeal thoſe odious laws.

This digreſſion may not be thought unconnected with the ſubject of the Corn Laws, when it is conſidered that the improved condition of the induſtrious poor, by increaſing equally the conſumption and the price of Bread Corn, is an important benefit to tillage; and that the import rates of Corn can only be increaſed without diſtreſs to the people, by improving the condition of the labouring poor, in proportion to the advance

in the prices they are to pay for Corn to ſupport and rear their families.

The exportation of Corn at prices when the bounty ceaſes, is not free from objection and danger. The exportation of wheat without bounty, at prices exceeding 44s. and below 46s. per quarter, will generally be feeble; but whenever that exportation becomes active, it may prove dangerous in the extreme. Wheat exported at 44s. with a bounty of 5s. per quarter to the ſhipper, is 39s. per quarter to the purchaſer for exportation; but wheat ſhipped at 45s. without bounty, cannot be delivered at a foreign market for leſs than 49s. per quarter; which is a proof that wheat cannot be drawn from other European markets to this kingdom on lower terms, if our wants become preſſing. The demand for wheat therefore at 45s. per quarter without bounty, ought to produce caution, and prevent the exportation of Corn which may be wanted at home. A bounty

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is wiſely paid on the exportation of Corn, to promote a vigourous tillage, by enabling the grower to export the exceſs of abundant crops on terms of advantage; and if the import rate of foreign wheat is fixed at 50s. per quarter, it may be more expedient to allow export with bounty to 45s, than to permit export without bounty between 44s. and 46s. per quarter; raiſing the export limits of other grain with bounty, in proportion to the prices which are to govern the importation. What is paid for the encouragement of tillage, produces a correſponding public benefit, by a produce proportioned to the encouragement given; but on the approach of ſcarcity or of dearth, as exportation without bounty, which will generally be too feeble to aid the action of the plough, becomes *when it is active* the ſtrongeſt and moſt unequivocal proof of a general dearth of Corn in Europe; neither the ſaving of the bounty nor the caſual benefit to the grower, ought to be admitted as arguments for the exportation of Corn, when

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it cannot be replaced from other markets at nearly the ſame prices, for the ſubſiſtence of the people in this kingdom.

In conſidering the propoſition of admitting Corn from Ireland and His Majeſty's colonies at lower prices than from foreign countries, it is neceſſary to examine the relative circumſtances of Great Britain and Ireland; for His Majeſty's colonies in America are too diſtant to receive material benefit by the ports of this kingdom being opened to their Corn on the ſame prices as to Iriſh grain, when the vicinity and forcing bounty of Ireland muſt previouſly command the priority and advantage of the Britiſh markets. The importation of Corn, hath hitherto been governed by the ſingle principle of expediency for relief againſt ſcarcity; and to admit Corn before the expediency for that relief exiſts, from a fertile and comparatively untaxed country *,

* Lord Sheffield's Obſervations on the Corn Bill; p. 14.

into a kingdom ſubject to a heavy land tax, and to a multitude of exciſes that in various ſhapes at leaſt affect the land †, muſt evidently be unfavourable to tillage. But if to this difference of taxes a forcing bounty is ſuperadded, the conſequences will obviouſly become ſtill more oppreſſive to the plough. It is ſtated in the information to the Lords of Council on the ſubject of the freights of Corn, printed by order of the Houſe of Commons, 7th of April, 1791, that the freights of Corn from the eaſt coaſt of England exceed the freights paid from Ireland to the weſtern ports of this kingdom; and to this advantage in the difference of freight muſt be added, a bounty of 26s. 8d. Iriſh money per ton paid on the exportation of wheat from Ireland. The nature of this intercourſe, between a country comparatively untaxed where labour is cheap, and a country heavily taxed where wages are high, ap-

† Ibid. p. 9.

pears

pears to be better underſtood in Ireland than in this kingdom. Sir Hercules Langriſh in his ſpeech in the Houſe of Commons of Ireland, April 7, 1791, (printed by Byrne, Grafton-ſtreet, Dublin,) expreſſes himſelf thus on that ſubject---" I have another pa-
" per in my hand, containing an account of
" the interchange of Corn between Great
" Britain and Ireland for the laſt ten years,
" publiſhed in England. By this it appears
" that in this commercial intercourſe, for
" that period, Ireland has had a balance in
" her favour to the following amount,

" Of oats and oatmeal	1,374,355 qrs.	
" Wheat - -	106,608 qrs.	
" Barley - -	119,342 qrs.	
" Flour - - -	95,737 cwt.	
" the value of which, at the loweſt calculation, is - - -		£.1,464,959 0 0
" From this if you deduct a balance of malt againſt us of 193,730 qrs. worth about -		242,161 0 0
" there remains a balance in our favour of -		£.1,222,798 0 0

This balance however has been increaſing conſiderably and progreſſively againſt Great Britain, in the laſt five years; and the balance of malt againſt Ireland has ceaſed, the importation of malt from either country being prohibited in both kingdoms *.

Objections are urged againſt the principle of ſtoring foreign Corn under the locks of the king and the importer, when importation on the low duties is not permitted. It appears by the account of Corn warehouſed and taken out for home conſumption, during the laſt eighteen years, printed by order of the Houſe of Commons, April 7, 1791, that the quantity of wheat and flour warehouſed in that period was,

					Qrs.	Buſh.
Of wheat	-	-	-		188,401	2
	Cwt.					
Flour	81,393	2	7	or	20,348	3
being in the whole			-		208,749	5

* See accounts of Corn imported from Ireland into Great Britain, and of Corn exported from Great Britain to Ireland, printed by order of the Houſe of Commons, April 7, 1791.

of

of which there was delivered out for home conſumption,

	Cwt.			Qrs.	Buſh.
Of wheat	-	-		108,187	6
Flour	30,410	0	3 equal to	7,602	4
being together	-	-		115,790	2

in the eighteen years, an aggregate quantity, which, according to Lord Sheffield's ſtatement, that 175,502 quarters is ſcarce one week's ſupply for Great Britain, cannot be viewed as a matter of any alarm. Corn is too bulky a commodity to be ſtored in conſiderable quantities, in any manner but in the ſtack yards of the farmers; and when warehouſed it is attended with conſiderable expence of labour, to preſerve the condition and quality of the grain. The quantity of all Corn imported in years of moderate or deficient produce, excepting oats, bears a very ſmall proportion to the average growth and conſumption; and when the crops actually fail, the deficiency is chiefly made up by the

exceſs

exceſs of former crops, of which ſome ſtock ever remains very generally diſperſed in innumerable hands amongſt the growers and dealers. The aggregate quantity of Corn and pulſe raiſed and conſumed in Great Britain, is very little if at all ſhort of twenty millions of quarters annually; and although it is very difficult to compute with ſufficient preciſion the actual quantity conſumed, there is ground to believe that the conſumption may exceed the quantity ſtated. The conſumption of Corn and pulſe in England and Wales, was computed, in 1766, at about 15,000,000 of quarters, including the ſeed for the next crop, eſtimating the number of the people at ſix millions *. If the conſumption of Scotland, and the conſumption produced by the increaſed population of England and Wales ſince 1766, is added to that quantity, the preſent conſumption of Great Britain cannot be ſuppoſed leſs than twenty

* Smith's Corn tracts, p. 144.

millions

millions of quarters; of which it is known by the receipts of the exciſe, that upwards of three millions of quarters of barley made into malt are conſumed in the brewery in England. If the proportion of imported Corn in moderate or even deficient ſeaſons, excepting oats, is therefore compared with the actual average produce and conſumption, the apprehenſions of injury to tillage from the importation of neceſſary ſupplies to prevent dearth, appear to be unfounded.

It has been ſtated that the growth of Corn in Britain, with the exception of oats, has been fully equal to the conſumption in the ſeventeen years from 1771 to 1782, and from 1783 to 1789, ſetting off the deficiency occaſioned by the uncommon failure in the crop of 1782. But this is a point, at which the tillage of Britain ought not, and muſt not be permitted to ſtop. Manufactures are increaſing, labour is preſſingly demanded to furniſh the ſupplies which are required of Britiſh goods,

and population is making vigorous progreſs in proportion to the encouragement which is given to induſtry. Tillage muſt be encouraged to make equal advances, to provide the ſubſiſtence for an additional number of people, the fruit of active fertile diligence; and tillage can only be raiſed to that heighth, or rather carried along with the proſperity of the kingdom to an extent not yet to be foreſeen, by ſtrong efficient deliberate meaſures.

A wiſe effectual ſyſtem of Corn laws, ought to be uniform and ſteady; founded in principles which are ſtrictly juſt and expedient; and made effectual by proviſions which can be carried ſufficiently into practice, without giving juſt cauſe of complaint to any deſcriptions of the people. In the objects of thoſe laws, the encouragement and protection of tillage claim the firſt regard; the proviſion of ſubſiſtence for the people in times of dearth, requires important attention; and it is no leſs for the benefit of the growers than

of

of the conſumers of Corn, that the commerce of grain under the Britiſh flag ſhould be cheriſhed and extended.

The encouragement of tillage can only be effectual, by a bounty to carry off the exceſs of very abundant harveſts, and by the monopoly of the home markets until it is expedient to admit ſupplies for relief againſt dearth. In fixing the limits of exportation with bounty, a bounty is paid to ſecure a market for the grower, by a vigorous exportation when Corn is below the prices that are conſidered neceſſary for his recompence, thus to enſure the benefit of more regular and active tillage for the ſubſiſtence of the people; and the higher the price at which Corn is exported, the more neceſſary is the aid of the bounty to enable the exporter of Britiſh grain to maintain the competition for the ſupply of foreign markets. In fixing the limits of importation, the expediency of relief againſt dearth, is perhaps the *only* principle by which

it can be governed with ſafety to our own tillage.

If the expediency of Relief againſt dearth, is admitted to be the principle for governing the importation, the relief muſt be weakened by increaſing the duties on Corn when imported to alleviate the wants of the people, who ſubmit chearfully to the payment of the bounties for the encouragement of tillage when Corn is cheap. The importation of Corn on a principle of relief againſt dearth, cannot be made an object of duty for the purpoſe of revenue, without diſtreſs to the poor; nor can it be made an object of duty for the purpoſe of fair regulation to the public at large upon any plea of being a protecting duty to the grower, without ſome equivalent benefit to the kingdom in the application of thoſe duties.

The diſtreſs produced by the alternatives of plenty and of dearth, is moſt ſeverely felt in the

the inland counties of the kingdom; and whenever there is a dearth of Corn the diſtreſs is firſt experienced, and is moſt ſevere upon the labouring poor, in the markets remote from the coaſt. By an account of the prices of wheat in the maritime counties of England, and in the counties inland for 19 years from 1770 to 1789 *, it appears that in ten years of the period in each of which the prices of wheat exceeded 46 s. per quarter in the inland counties, the average prices of thoſe counties invariably exceeded the average of the prices on the coaſt, by 2 s. 3 d. per quarter on the medium of the ten years; and that in each of nine years of the period in which wheat was below 46 s. per quarter in the inland counties, the prices of thoſe counties were lower than the average prices of the counties on the coaſt, by 11$\frac{7}{9}$ d. or very nearly, 1 s. per quarter on the medium of the nine years. In

* Appendix, No. III.

years of plenty, Corn is lower in the inland than in the maritime counties, becauſe the exceſs of their growth is ſubject to the expence of conveyance to the coaſt before it can be exported; and in years of dearth, Corn is dearer in the inland than in the maritime counties, becauſe the expence of conveyance muſt be added to the prices paid for the ſupplies of foreign Corn drawn from the coaſt. As the inland parts of the kingdom are the ſeat of manufactures, and of the moſt vigorous population, it is doubly impolitic to increaſe the difficulty and expence of their procuring ſubſiſtence, by laying high duties on Corn in times of ſcarcity.

As the home ſale is the firſt object of the grower, and is generally his moſt profitable market; the appointment of the 15th of November for the firſt period after harveſt for aſcertaining the prices to govern the importation, is very favourable to tillage. When the prices for this purpoſe were aſcertained

at

at the Courts of Quarter Seſſion, the returns of the prices which had been paid in the autumn when Corn happened ſometimes to be ſcarce, had the natural effect to open the ports at the Quarter Seſſion in October without neceſſity, in the face of a new and perhaps a very abundant harveſt. But as the government of the importation by the Courts of Quarter Seſſion is repealed, and the prices for this purpoſe are aſcertained by the Receiver of Corn returns; it may be proper to enquire whether any further alteration favourable to tillage can be made, in the periods for aſcertaining the prices to govern the importation. By the Act 1 James II. the duty on foreign Corn was directed to be governed by prices to be certified by the Juſtices of the Michaelmas and Eaſter Quarter Seſſion, and in London by the Lord Mayor and Aldermen in the months of October and April. But the period of ſix months being found longer than was expedient, and no intermediate Court of Seſſion by the Juſtices being held but at the

the quarterly periods, the Juſtices in the counties on the coaſt were directed by the 5th of Geo. II. to certify at every Quarter Seſſion the prices by which the duties on foreign Corn were to be paid for the next three months; and by the Act 6 Geo. III. the Lord Mayor and Aldermen of London were directed to certify the prices of Corn in the months of January and July in like manner as in the months of October and April, according to which the duties on foreign Corn ſhould be paid for the enſuing three months. But although this method of aſcertaining the prices for three months, is more expedient than for a period of ſix months; it is not conſidered to be the moſt favourable, for the intereſt either of tillage or of navigation. The periods to aſcertain thoſe prices by the New Act 31 Geo. III. cap. 30. are the 15th of November, 15th of February, 15th of May, and 15th of Auguſt. The period of the 15th of November is highly favourable to tillage; the period of the 15th of

February,

February, or of the 15th of March, are either of them to be conſidered as equally favourable, becauſe the markets prior to thoſe periods are in general fully ſupplied with Corn; but the period of the 15th of May is not conſidered to be equally favourable for the protection of tillage, againſt undue or too early importation. The importation is to be governed, by the average of the prices for the ſix weeks preceding the 15th of May. It is obſerved by the Lords of the Committee of Privy Council for trade, in their Lordſhips report to His Majeſty reſpecting Corn dated 21ſt of December, 1789, printed by order of the Houſe of Commons, Jan. 22, 1790 *, which was made previous to the Repreſentation of their Lordſhips on the ſame ſubject; "that in years of ſcarcity the "greateſt preſſure always happens in the "ſpring months, and in the beginning of "ſummer." The markets are generally very fully ſupplied with Corn through February and March, previous to which ſeaſon the thraſhing is

* Page 6.

is more general when there is leſs labour required in the fields, and when the ſmall farmers find it convenient to carry their grain to market to provide for the payment of the rents due at Candlemas and Lady-day; but in the month of April and in the beginning of May the ſupplies fall off, and the farmers from the employment of ſowing their ſpring Corn and other field labour at that ſeaſon, have leſs leiſure for preparing their Corn for market. During theſe ſix weeks preceding the 15th of May, one of the periods fixed for aſcertaining the prices to govern the importation of Corn, the prices are uſually higher than in the ſix weeks preceding the 15th of March, occaſioned by ſcanty temporary ſupplies; and importations of foreign Corn will frequently take place from returns to be made in May which would not have happened from returns computed by the prices previous to the 15th of March. Nor is this the only evil of the ports being opened too early, occaſioned by the making up of the returns in May; for if

if there is any deficiency of the crop to require ſupplies from abroad, the period of three months being too ſhort to admit of veſſels being diſpatched to the Baltic and to complete the voyage within the time, it generally happens that thoſe diſtricts which have been open for importation in May, are continued open in Auguſt, the ſupplies of foreign Corn being thus allowed for two periods of importation inſtead of one. It may therefore be more expedient, to fix the periods for aſcertaining the prices to govern the importation, at a medium between ſix months, the time fixed by the Act 1 James II. and three months, the time fixed by the Acts 5 Geo. II. and 6 Geo. III. becauſe thoſe returns could then only be made at Quarter Seſſions for ſix or for three months. If the periods were therefore to be fixed on the 15th of November, the 15th of March, and the 15th of July; the opportunities of admitting foreign importation would be fewer; and as the importation could ſeldom

happen in November or March without preſſing neceſſity, more time would be allowed the farmers for the diſpoſal of their crops before foreign Corn could be introduced. And the conſumers would not have cauſe of complaint, that the opportunities of importation were fewer, becauſe the effectual encouragement of tillage is their beſt dependence for ſupply at moderate prices. The employment of Britiſh ſhipping would be encouraged by the ſame alteration, of allowing time to make one voyage to the Baltic out and home; inſtead of having recourſe to Holland for Corn brought to that market from the north of Europe in foreign bottoms, or to the markets of France when time to import Corn from the Baltic is not allowed; and the frequent occaſions (from thoſe ſupplies being inadequate) to prolong the time of importation unneceſſarily for ſix months, when an importation of four months would generally be ſufficient to relieve the wants of any of the

diſtricts

diſtricts of the kingdom, would thereby be prevented.

Lord Sheffield mentions, that arguments for more free exportation are urged; not only in favour of tillage, but alſo to prevent our being thrown out of the trade of Corn, and the turning it into other hands by the frequent and continued ſtops to exportation *. This conſideration claims very important attention at this time, when France by the ſale of the church lands, and by the reduction of taxes, is giving redoubled vigour to her tillage; and when at the ſame moment of giving renewed action by this means to her manufactures alſo, her policy is directed to the object of emulating the maritime power of Great Britain, by improving her reſources for raiſing ſeamen. France by one ſtrong meaſure has ſecured to her ſhipping the carrying of tobacco, even to the excluſion of veſſels belonging to the places of its growth; for

* Page 71.

by an edict which prohibits the importation of tobacco except in French veſſels, or in veſſels belonging to the country of its growth bound to France direct, tobacco imported in French bottoms is to pay a duty of 18 livres 15 ſous per quintal, but when imported in ſhips belonging to the place of growth, a duty of 25 livres per quintal is to be levied. The difference of 6 livres 5 ſous per quintal in the duties, exceeding one halfpenny ſterling per pound, exceeds the utmoſt freight on tobacco from the United States of America to Europe by the ſhips of any nation.

But no meaſure can tend more effectually to promote the tillage, manufactures and commerce of France, and aſſiſt her exertions to rival the maritime power of Great Britain, than the propoſition which has been urged to prohibit the landing of foreign Corn in the ports of this kingdom, when the importation on the low duties is not allowed; which would diſcourage the employment of Britiſh

ſhipping

ſhipping in the commerce of grain, and compel foreigners to carry their produce to the ports of Holland, France and other countries where a wiſer policy is purſued. And next to the actual prohibition of landing the Corn, the meaſure of impoſing oppreſſive duties on Corn thus warehouſed when delivered out for home conſumption, which tends to the ſame point of indirect and virtual prohibition of this commerce, muſt check the employment of Britiſh ſhips in the trade, and induce foreigners to ſend their cargoes to other markets of ſale or *entrepot*. If the plough is to be puſhed forward with effect, it muſt be done by a well connected good ſyſtem, which ſhall unite the intereſts of tillage, navigation and manufactures; and the weak policy of narrow partial meaſures, whether ſpringing from deſpondency or project, muſt not be ſuffered to impede the ſail or the loom, and thereby check the general proſperity. It is from increaſing population, and from the wages of active induſtry, that the grower of

Corn

Corn is to reap the moſt profitable returns for his harveſt; and not from ſhutting the ports of his country againſt admitting the ſhips or cargoes of the foreign cuſtomers of Great Britain, to be received either in payment or as ſecurity for the products or manufactures of this kingdom. If foreigners are prohibited from coming to ſell their products here, they may not always be enabled to pay for what they have previouſly bought, nor can they afford to come again to buy; becauſe coming without a cargo, they muſt loſe the freight from their own or from ſome other country to Great Britain.

Lord Sheffield obſerves, that every man who attends to the ſubject, will acknowledge how highly neceſſary it is that there ſhould be a permanent law; and expreſſes great ſurpriſe to find a "ſuſpending power given to the "Privy Council, which deſtroys all permanency "of ſyſtem, all confidence in the ſteadineſs of "ſettled laws, and conſequently all ſpirit of "ſpeculation

" ſpeculation in the growth, the manufacture " and the trade of Corn." His Lordſhip adds, that " the neceſſity of allowing a diſpenſing " power is by no means ſhewn in the Re- " preſentation of the Committee of Council, " which affects to aſſign reaſons for each " head of the Bill *." But his Lordſhip in his zeal to condemn the ſyſtem of 1773, has neglected the ſtrongeſt reaſon to be offered againſt the neceſſity for a power to diſpenſe with the laws for regulating the commerce of grain, by the proof that Corn Laws may be framed which render ſuch a power unneceſſary. The ſettled ſteadineſs and uniform operation of a permanent law, muſt prove the moſt vigorous encouragement to the grower, and the beſt ſecurity againſt dearth to the conſumer of Corn. Mr. Pownall's Bills, the Acts 13 and 14 Geo. III. were intended to become permanent laws; and thoſe laws were only ſuſpended upon two occaſions during the entire period they have been enacted;

* P. 64, 65.

neither

neither of which interruptions to the operation of thoſe laws, were occaſioned by any defect in the principles of the Acts. The firſt interruption was in December 1782, when a temporary Bill was introduced by Mr. Newnham, and it was urged that a ſubſequent law, the Act 21 Geo. III. for regulating the Importation and Exportation of Corn in London, and in the Counties of Kent and Eſſex, had prevented ſupplies to the metropolis; which temporary Bill after the very ſhort crop of 1782, might be neceſſary from the period at which the averages to govern the importation were ſettled by the Quarter Seſſions, and the number of weeks from which thoſe prices were computed. The ſecond interruption was in December 1789, occaſioned by the inefficacy of the Act 29 Geo. III. which preſcribed a method for aſcertaining the average prices that was not or could not be carried ſufficiently into practice; and the effects of that method for aſcertaining the prices have been, an imperfect execution

of the laws for a period of not quite two months, from the 29th of September to the 23d of December 1789; and an entire ſuſpenſion of all the laws which were previouſly in force for the encouragement of tillage for a period of very near two years, from the 23d of December in the year 1789, to the 15th of November 1791.

It was in order to remedy the inconveniences which had been experienced by temporary ſtatutes, whereby the benefits of former Acts for the advancement of tillage and navigation had been ſuſpended, that the Act 13 Geo. III. cap. 43. was paſſed, "for re-"gulating the Importation and Exportation "of Grain by a permanent law, under ſuch "general rules and proviſions as might ren-"der, for the time to come, ſuch temporary "laws unneceſſary, would afford encourage-"ment to the farmer, be the means of in-"creaſing the growth of that neceſſary com-"modity, and of affording a cheaper and

" more conſtant ſupply to the poor, and " preventing abuſe in that article of trade." The Acts introduced by Mr. Pownall, were prepared with much deliberation, very extenſive knowledge of the ſubject, and the moſt clear conception of the effects of the proviſions they enacted; and they eſcaped being mangled in the laſt ſtages of their progreſs. It was ſaid of the Act 13 Geo. III. by a very eminent writer; " With all its " imperfections, however, we may perhaps " ſay of it what was ſaid of the laws of " Solon, that, though not the beſt in itſelf, " it is the beſt which the intereſts, preju- " dices and temper of the times would ad- " mit of—It may perhaps in due time pre- " pare the way for a better *." The ſame praiſe, *ſo qualified*, may be applied to the Act of the laſt Seſſion, 31 Geo. III. cap. 30. which it is hoped will prepare the way for a better, in which partial intereſts and narrow prejudices may yield to the public good.

* Smith's Wealth of Nations, Book IV. chap. v.

This

This law may probably require very early reviſion. If the importation price of foreign wheat is to be fixed at 50s. per quarter, the grower ought not to be expoſed to a competition under circumſtances of particular diſadvantage, before the prices advance to that rate. The raiſing of the importation prices, makes ſome alteration neceſſary in the export limits; and it merits diſcuſſion, whether the exportation of wheat with bounty to 45s. per quarter, may not be more beneficial, all circumſtances conſidered, than exportation without bounty between 44s. and 46s.; regulating the exportation of other grain by the ſame principles. In the exertions to extend the progreſs of the plough, whatever can tend to the great object of bringing more land under tillage demands attention. Ireland in the vigour of her cultivation gives a bounty of 2s. per barrel of 280 pounds, upon the exportation of beans, which are a very profitable change of crop in ſoils equally favourable for the culture of that pulſe and of

wheat; and a correſponding bounty on beans exported from Great Britain would not be miſapplied, if an increaſed quantity of the land which now lays waſte, was by the effect of that encouragement brought into tillage. The particular objections to the period of the 15th of May for aſcertaining the prices to govern the importation of foreign Corn, and the too frequent opportunities for opening the ports, may be obviated by an amendment of the preſent law.

The importation of foreign grain being governed by the expediency of admitting the ſupplies for relief againſt dearth, Corn cannot be conſidered as an object of duty for revenue, altho' it may be made an object of duty for regulation. It has been objected by Lord Sheffield againſt the warehouſing of foreign corn, that "when once landed and "ſtored it will often anſwer better to the "merchant to ſend it at prime coſt, or even "lower, to our home market, than to re-

"ſhip,

" ſhip, inſure, and pay freight, to carry it " farther *." To levy an additional duty of 2s. 6d. per quarter on warehouſed wheat, from a merchant who is ſelling his Corn at or under prime coſt, muſt be violently oppreſſive; but when additional import duties have been laid on Corn, it may be an object of vigorous and wiſe policy, to apply thoſe duties as far as they would go, and without producing any burthen on the revenue, in a moderate bounty to leſſen the charges of reſhipping, inſuring and carrying that Corn farther, after being reſhipped in Britiſh bottoms. By this means, the home markets would be relieved from the exceſs of any foreign ſupplies, and the commerce of the kingdom would be extended. Corn ſold for exportation will always bring the higheſt prices, when the markets are filled with the greateſt number of buyers; but Britain cannot become the firſt market of reſort for Corn, until a certainty may be eſtabliſhed of

* P. 55.

regular

regular ſupplies being furniſhed to relieve the neceſſities of the countries in want of grain. Foreign countries threatened with dearth, will look to a market from whence the neceſſary ſupplies to relieve their diſtreſs may be certain at ſome price; and unleſs their actual wants can be ſupplied from this country, with the like certainty as from Amſterdam, Hamburg and Dantzig, Britain muſt ſtill remain a ſecondary market only at limited prices. In all caſes of dearth, the firſt conſideration is the certainty of relief, in compariſon of which the coſt will be a matter of leſs importance. The exportation of Britiſh Corn being reſtrained, when the prices exceed certain rates; the certainty of ſupplies to foreign countries in want of Corn, can only be eſtabliſhed in Britain by a commerce in foreign grain, which may at all times be exported.

If a liberal and effectual encouragement is given to the carrying trade of foreign Corn, the

the probity and punctuality of our merchants in all engagements of ſale and of purchaſe, would create an important increaſe of the commerce in grain to ſupply the ſouthern markets of Europe; and the landed intereſt would reap the firſt fruits of that encouragement, by increaſed demands for Corn. When demands aroſe for Corn to be exported, the farmers would be firſt benefited if they had Corn to be delivered within export limits, with the advantage of the full export bounty. The merchant importers who pay freight, inſurance, and all charges from abroad, would find it their intereſt to wait until the farmers had ſhipped off the exceſs of abundant crops, and until increaſing demands enabled them to obtain the value of their Corn, including the freight, inſurance, and all charges incurred upon it from abroad; and the competition of increaſed demands, would produce the advantage of higher prices to the growers and the importers. To markets where the certainty of obtaining ſupplies is eſtabliſhed, all

nations in want of Corn will reſort; when the variety of demands will ſupport Corn at its full value, and in many inſtances enhance it to its utmoſt price. And the proſperity of tillage, manufactures and navigation, would be generally promoted, by an increaſing commerce under the Britiſh flag, to ſupply the ſouthern markets of Europe with grain.

APPEN-

APPENDIX, N° 1.

An ACCOUNT of the Prices of Wheat in Windſor Market for 19 Years, from 1746 to 1765, from the Audit Books in Eton College; and alſo of the Prices in England for the ſame Years, from an anonymous Authority, ſuppoſed to be the late Mr. Combrune, of Hampſtead; divided into two Periods, of ſeven Years, from 1746 to 1752; and of 12 Years, from 1753 to 1764, both Years included.

Prices at Windſor Market.				Prices in England.			
1746	£. 1	19	0	1746	£. 1	10	4
1747	1	14	10	1747	1	7	1
1748	1	17	0	1748	1	8	9 1/2
1749	1	17	0	1749	1	8	9 1/2
1750	1	12	6	1750	1	5	3 1/2
1751	1	18	6	1751	1	9	11 1/2
1752	2	1	10	1752	1	12	6 1/2
Average of the above 7 years per quarter, 9 gallon meaſure	1	17	2 6/7	Average of the above 7 years	1	8	11 6/7
Deduct 1-9th difference of meaſure	0	4	1 4/7				
Average of the above 7 years per Winchester quarter	1	13	1 3/7				
1753	£. 2	4	8	1753	£. 1	14	9
1754	1	14	8	1754	1	6	11 1/2
1755	1	13	10	1755	1	6	4
1756	2	5	3	1756	1	15	2 1/2
1757	3	0	0	1757	2	6	8
1758	2	10	0	1758	1	18	11
1759	1	19	10	1759	1	11	0
1760	1	16	6	1760	1	8	5
1761	1	10	3	1761	1	3	7
1762	1	19	0	1762	1	10	4
1763	2	0	9	1763	1	11	8 1/2
1764	2	6	9	1764	1	16	4 1/2
Average of the above 12 years per quarter, 9 gallon meaſure	2	1	9 1/2	Average of the above 12 years	1	12	6 1/2
Deduct 1-9th difference of meaſure	0	4	7 1/2				
Average of the above 12 years per Winchester quarter	1	17	2				

An ACCOUNT of CORN exported from England in 19 Years from 1746 to 1765, and of the Bounties paid thereon; divided into Periods, of seven Years, from 1746 to 1752; and of 12 Years from 1753 to 1764, both Years included.

Years.	Barley.		Malt.		Oatmeal.		Rye.		Wheat.		Amount of Bounties.		
	Qrs.	Bs.	Qrs.	Bs.	Qrs.	Bs.	Qrs.	Bs.	Qrs.	Bs.	£.	s.	d.
1746	158,719	3	282,024	6	20,203	0	45,782	3	130,646	2	98,291	17	4
1747	103,140	2	361,289	3	2,122	4	92,718	3	266,906	7	141,123	1	10
1748	73,857	0	349,363	0	3,768	4	103,891	4	543,387	5	202,637	14	11
1749	52,621	3	355,469	5	1,281	2	106,312	4	629,049	0	228,566	8	1
1750	224,509	7	330,754	2	4,283	4	99,049	3	947,602	1	262,583	0	2
1751	32,698	0	256,547	4	2,476	2	71,048	4	661,416	4	154,904	17	4
1752	106,331	3	287,578	6	1,590	1	57,847	2	429,279	4	186,218	7	0
	751,868	2	2,223,027	2	35,725	1	576,649	7	3,608,287	7	1,274,325	6	10
1753	67,049	0	274,424	7	7,012	1	24,835	7	299,608	7	222,508	8	6
1754	47,776	3	321,995	0	2,330	2	42,915	1	356,270	1	143,412	7	2
1755	32,836	0	341,568	6	1,112	2	43,441	7	237,459	2	166,134	7	4
1756	26,938	5	236,925	6	2,310	4	29,968	7	101,936	4	109,228	1	8
1757	7,094	7	56,164	2	4,417	6	907	1	11,226	0	22,558	16	9
1758	691	0	10,728	1	1,831	4	0	0	9,233	6	3,752	6	10
1759	22,862	4	166,079	0	3,134	6	41,480	2	226,426	0	53,802	9	2
1760	34,592	4	224,195	0	2,338	4	52,776	4	390,710	4	118,247	4	8
1761	97,897	1	279,051	5	2,839	6	57,571	1	440,746	2	153,558	4	3
1762	130,873	0	254,429	5	1,368	4	28,410	2	294,500	0	129,210	2	6
1763	38,390	1	165,494	0	1,664	4	12,933	7	427,074	3	152,879	13	1
1764	9,218	6	223,220	5	1,101	0	27,690	1	396,537	5	149,607	2	7
	516,219	7	2,554,276	5	31,461	3	362,931	0	3,191,729	2	1,424,899	4	6